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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TASHKENT 001576

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND DRL

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UZ](#)
SUBJECT: PULATOV FOR PRESIDENT?

Classified By: CDA BRAD HANSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

¶1. (C) Summary: A Birlik party member told poloff on August 17 that an initiative group would be formed in September to announce the candidacy of Birlik Chairman Abdurakhmon Pulatov for the expected presidential elections in December. The Birlik party member, who is also head of the Ezgulik human rights organization, added that Ezgulik was planning on issuing a shadow report on torture to present along with the Uzbek Government's official report to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) in Geneva in November. We believe that Pulatov, who currently resides in the U.S., has little chance of being registered as a candidate, let alone polling many votes, but nevertheless, Pulatov would be the most prominent opposition figure who has yet declared his intention to run for president. End summary.

PULATOV PLANS TO ANNOUNCE CANDIDACY IN SEPTEMBER

¶2. (C) On August 17, Birlik party member Vasila Inoyatova told poloff that an initiative group would be formed in September to announce the candidacy of Birlik Chairman Abdurakhim Pulatov for the expected presidential elections in December. The initiative group will attempt to collect 300 signatures and submit the necessary documents to the State Electoral Committee to register Pulatov as an official candidate. According to Inoyatova, Pulatov, who has been living in the United States since 1998, is under no illusions that the current regime will register him as an official candidate and he has no plans to return to Uzbekistan to actually campaign. Instead, Inoyatova said that Pulatov's candidacy will serve as a symbolic protest highlighting continued human rights abuses and the lack of political reform in Uzbekistan.

EZGULIK PLANS SHADOW REPORT FOR UN COMMITTEE

¶3. (C) Inoyatova, who is also head of the Ezgulik human rights organization, also said that Ezgulik is planning on issuing a shadow report on torture to present along with the Uzbek Government's official report to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) in Geneva in November. Originally, Ezgulik was planning on issuing the shadow report in conjunction with the Rapid Reaction Group, a coalition of human rights organizations in Uzbekistan. However, in July, Ezgulik was asked to leave the Rapid Reaction Group by the other groups, which felt that Ezgulik was too political in nature because of its close ties to the Birlik party. Ezgulik now plans to issue the shadow report on its own, and Inoyatova has requested financial assistance from the U.S. Government to send two of its members to Geneva so that they

could present the report to the committee in person.

COMMENT

¶4. (C) If Pulatov does announce in September his candidacy for the presidency, he joins a list of at least four other human rights and opposition activists, including Suhbat Abdullayev, Akhtam Shaymardanov, Jahongir Shosalimov and Abdillo Tojiboy ug'li, who have already announced plans to run in the expected December elections. We agree with Inoyatova that Pulatov has little chance of being registered as a candidate, let alone polling many votes. Given his many years in exile, Pulatov is no longer an influential figure in Uzbek society, and Birlik's influence and current membership levels also are negligible. Nevertheless, Pulatov would be the most prominent opposition figure who has yet declared his intention to run. His candidacy also may draw added publicity to Ezgulik's planned shadow report for the UN Committee Against Torture in November.

BIO NOTE

¶5. (SBU) Born in 1945, Pulatov is an ethnic Uzbek from Tashkent province. In 1968, he graduated from the Moscow Energy Institute and was a graduate student at the USSR Academy of Sciences' Computing Center in Moscow from 1968 to ¶1973. From 1973 to 1991, he worked in the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences' Cybernetics Research Institute, and in 1984, he defended his doctoral dissertation on robotics and artificial intelligence. In 1980, Pulatov joined the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and in 1985, he became the Communist Party Committee Secretary at the Cybernetics Research Institute. Pulatov began his independent political activity in the

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spring of 1988 as a member of the Committee to Save the Aral Sea. In the same year, he became a founding member of the Birlik initiative group and was elected its chairman in 1989.

In 1992, Pulatov was beaten by unknown assailants and fled to Baku, Azerbaijan. In 1998, Pulatov relocated to the United States and is currently living in northern Virginia. He is married and has two children.

HANSON